

Lindsley (L. B.)

NASHVILLE AND THE UNIVERSITY,

AN

ADDRESS,

BY

J. BERRIEN LINDSLEY,

*Chancellor of the University,*

DELIVERED IN THE

MASONIC HALL,

AT THE

OPENING OF THE SIXTEENTH SESSION

OF THE

MEDICAL DEPARTMENT,

*November 6, 1865.*

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PUBLISHED JULY 14, 1869.  
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1869.

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A BRIEF HISTORY

OF THE UNIVERSITY

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WASCOE HALL

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## AN ADDRESS.

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As popular intelligence, the result of universal education, is the encomium of a State, so is a great University the crown and glory of a city. Wherever it is the good fortune of a city to possess such an institution, invariably do we find the citizens placing the highest estimate upon its value and pointing to it as the foremost and most honorable of their civic institutions. Wherever a city lacks this crowning gem, we always discover ample evidences of the deficiency, and often see imperfect efforts to supply its place by various complementary establishments.

A University is an institution *sui generis* ; and has its own mode of birth and development. Its fundamental object is the cultivation of knowledge for its own sake. Hence from its very nature it is broad and liberal and humanizing and refining. ALL Science is its domain ; and the application of science to all the wants and purposes of man. Herein consists the peculiarity of the institution—its very universality—its comprehending every branch of human knowledge in minutest detail, and not overlooking the practical application of this knowledge to the every-day affairs of man.

Thus it comes to pass that while on the one hand the great thinkers, those giant minds which come in contact with the few yet control the many, such as Calvin and Des Cartes ; Bacon and Locke ; Kant and Schelling ; Hume and Hamilton ; Burke and Gladstone ; Edwards and Madison have proceeded from the university ; so on the other hand those grand discoverers and inventors whose names are indelibly written upon the earth and the heavens or ceaselessly proclaimed by the everlasting forces of nature ; such as Columbus and Kane ; Galileo and Kepler ;



Newton and LaPlace ; Franklin and Morse ; Davy and Faraday ; Watt and Volta ; are equally her children.

The grand historical truth, in this connection, may be briefly stated, thus : That for the last two thousand years, commencing with those acute and wonderfully educated little communities dwelling upon the sea-coasts and islands of Greece and its vicinity, coming down through the long centuries of Roman domination, through the complex changes of mediæval periods, and the mighty movements of modern ages ; all the while the University has been the seat, the focus, the centre, the centripetal and the centrifugal force, the gravitating and the radiating point of intellect and mind and soul in all phases and developments among that portion of the human family which alone seems gifted with the power of progress.

From its very nature—essential and historic,—the University is the culmination of the human intellect, and where this is combined with a devout and Christian spirit, the culmination of human excellence. Well may any old community take a just pride in possessing a University ; well may any new community make it a chief object of honorable ambition to found, endow, sustain and develop such an institution.

Universities are peculiar in their embryology, if we may be permitted to borrow a term from natural science to express this historic fact, to-wit : that the origin of the great Universities appears to have been either literally or very nearly coeval with that of the communities in which they have flourished and whose prosperity and renown they have so signally advanced. Oxford and Cambridge, names recalled with profound affection and sincere veneration, in each and every of the vast and widely scattered regions where the English tongue is now domesticated, had their origin as University towns. Edinboro, whose very name is classic and synonymous with science and learning and literature, possessed her University when but a small village. Glasgow, that grand commercial mart, was but an insignificant western frontier town when the foundations of that noble University were laid from whose workshops proceeded a Watt, and whose halls produced a Hunter. Boston and Harvard were twin births

in a bleak and forbidding spot, among savage foes, with an unkind foster mother, but gentle, loving sisters ; and the city and the University have gone on from that day to this, in all material and intellectual prosperity, until each has attained a growth, an influence and renown—fairly estimated—second to that of no other city or University now existing, Paris alone excepted, whose magnificent University was likewise contemporary with her early youth.

What has been stated of Oxford and Cambridge, Edinboro, Glasgow, Boston and Paris, is equally true of Philadelphia, which had a population of but a few thousand when the University of Pennsylvania was founded; which, with her legitimate offspring the Philosophical Society, and the Academy of Natural Sciences have given that city such reputation and influence as a scientific centre. When the sagacious monarch, whose broad and practical views transferred Russia from an Asiatic to a European power, founded a capital to be his special monument, he also established a University which, no less than the court, gives dignity and grace to St. Petersburg, and for centuries to come, must be the source of European civilization to immense regions of the Asiatic continent.

Did time allow this position could be much more fully illustrated, and negatively no less than positively.

The practical application for this audience is, that all the children and all the friends of our University may take heart as to her future, yea, even her remote future, and may, with imaginative but truthful eyes behold, through the perspective of many coming generations, which are destined to breathe this genial clime, to survey these beauteous landscapes, to admire and study that splendid capitol, to thread these busy streets, to sleep in yonder quiet resting places of the dead—multitudes of ingenuous, high-minded, aspiring youth thronging her halls, inspecting her museums and galleries, searching her libraries, and going out from her fostering bosom, laden with the choicest fruits of learning and science, art and religion, as the substance of their own happiness and the means of good to their fellow man. To-day, at the close of one of the most eventful civil wars re-



corded in human annals, we can look back upon the history of our city and our University through the short but significant period of three generations, and look forward through the unknown but hopeful period of many yet to come, and say with unfaltering confidence that by reason of the zeal, prudence, foresight and skill of the past three generations the future of the University is sure.

When nearly half Middle Tennessee was erected into a monument, to one of those brave men who lost their lives in founding a continental American nationality, under the name of the county of Davidson, of the State of North Carolina, and when a little village, foreknown to be a city, was dedicated to the memory of another illustrious North Carolinian hero, then were laid unseen and unnoticed, but deep and upon a rock the foundations of the University of Nashville. From that day to this has the University advanced as rapidly, if not much more rapidly than the city in fame, in influence, in numbers, and has stamped with indelible permanence, the highest characteristic, that of intellectuality, upon her reputation. Whatever of fame or note she may have for commerce or industrial enterprise, like that of Philadelphia and of Boston, grows dim by the brighter rays of her intellectual renown. Her fame has ever been that of a seat of mind, of political, religious, educational influence, and whatever else may be superadded let this continue to be the great aim of her citizens. Let the abundant stores of wealth, which mercantile, mechanical and agricultural skill will profusely create, find their favorite luxury in promoting art, and letters and science through the University and kindred Institutions.

A rapid, imperfect, cursory glance at what has been achieved during her past career upon very limited means will be the best demonstration of what may and will be done in a very few years from this time by the University, unless the people of Nashville should prove more recreant to every enlightened idea than Anglo-Americans have ever yet manifested themselves. Davidson Academy, Cumberland College, the University of Nashville has not heretofore been an endowed institution; always possessing ample grounds and buildings for any required work, it has all along

depended upon the skill and reputation of its faculties for the means of living. Hitherto, compared with many similar institutions in America, its means were very slender, yet for sixty years it has maintained prominence and for a longer period usefulness as a seat of learning ; it has sent out *alumni* whose conceded ability would do honor to any institution and whose names will always be illustrious in the annals of Tennessee and the nation. At the close of the late epoch, though having but two departments in operation, her halls were frequented by some six or seven hundred youth, gathered from an area of a million square miles, and her tuition receipts amounted to over \$40,000 per annum. When it is remembered that the income of the institution from funds was for the greater portion of this period nothing, and that it never equalled two thousand dollars per annum, the result is certainly very remarkable and speaks the highest eulogy upon the skilful administration of the resources at her command.

Now at last we may perceive before us the brilliant career so long anticipated, and those who are henceforward to control city and University may, if wise and energetic, reap the full fruition of the patience, skill and self-denial manifested by their predecessors throughout so many weary, toilsome years. Judging from what we, with our own eyes, have seen take place in at least twenty cities, North, East and West, Nashville, in every human probability, will reach a census of 100,000 inhabitants in about ten years from this time. When this does take place, the University now so wealthy in buildings and grounds will have an ample endowment, and her active usefulness be placed beyond contingency. The same prudent administration which, in the course of fifteen years now closing, has replaced her ancient barn-like buildings by handsome edifices comparing well with those of any similar institution without diminishing the substantial wealth of the University, may in the next fifteen accomplish this great result, and at the same time keep in active operation two or more departments of learning. If superadded to this the inhabitants of Nashville, a wealthy, active, growing city of 50,000 people, display the same liberality as has been shown by very many Northern villages, much greater results may be



reached in a shorter space of time. The University here is now like a mine nearly opened ; a little more expenditure produces untold wealth. It is like a great manufacturing establishment with buildings and machinery costing many thousands ; a little additional expenditure builds the engine, sets the whole in motion, and brings a rich return. It is like a railroad well graded and well ironed ; add the rolling stock and at once an unceasing source of wealth is created. So substantial are the means of the University and so capable of varied and admirable application, that the immediate expenditure of one hundred thousand dollars by the city in its corporate capacity would be by far the best investment ever thus made, wise as these may have been in their day.

The pride of Michigan, the admiration of the entire Northwest, is the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor, whose doors are freely thrown open to all, and where more than a thousand youth from many different States receive literary, medical, legal and scientific training. This splendid seat of learning is the result of national munificence and wise State legislation, giving and managing vast tracts of fertile lands. Yet here in Nashville, and in impoverished Tennessee, it is perfectly practical in two or three years to put in brilliant operation the two most popular departments of the University, (namely, literary and medical,) upon the same plan. As in 1860 these very departments were here attended by more than six hundred students paying the highest fees ; and as at Ann Arbor, a remote frontier town, these departments now number more than six hundred members, it does not admit of doubt that the Michigan system in this large city and exceedingly central location, engrafted upon a famous University would at once bring a thousand pupils into the said departments. Pause and contemplate for one moment the effect of one thousand University students upon the material prosperity and the reputation and renown of a city. No one railroad, no single great factory, can for a moment bear comparison with this overshadowing and multiplex establishment. In Philadelphia it is only since my student days that the number of medical students has reached this figure, and yet



from the days of Rush, medical education has been the distinguishing feature of Philadelphia, and far more than her commerce and manufactures has made her name dear and honored throughout the South and the West and the North.

These two great departments, the Free College and the Free Medical School of the University being established, the work which Nashville may do through and by and with its University is but half accomplished, and would require but a portion of her University foundation. A Polytechnic School, a Normal School, a Law School should speedily follow, and would attract many hundred scholars and add greatly to the usefulness of the University and vastly to the prosperity of the city. An Astronomical Observatory should crown the summit of St. Cloud, adding grace and sublimity to a splendid city park and reservoir upon its slopes, and ever presenting to the philosophic mind a pleasing contrast with imperial, palatial St. Cloud beyond the ocean, *that* dedicated to the luxury and ease and dissipation of pampered rulers, *this* to the use and recreation and enlightenment of a free and happy people. Extensive buildings of durable limestone, of handsome architecture and appropriate structure, should be erected on the University Lawn and filled with great collections illustrating all the various departments of art and kingdoms of nature. Nor need Theology, the first, the last and noblest of all the sciences, be overlooked or omitted from the extensive plan. Wise churches and pious men should see to it that chapels with ministers, and Theological libraries, and Biblical professorships are amply provided and endowed, in order that the minds of all the large concourse of youth here assembled may be directed to extra-mundane ideas. The church must not neglect the University. The severance bodes ill to each. As the slightest contact with the University forces the brutish person to recognize the existence of mind even though he comprehends it not ; so the very presence of the church compels the merely intellectual man to recognize the existence of a somewhat beyond this world and after this life. No object is more worthy the liberality of a Christian man of wealth in this region than the erection of a chapel and the endowment of a chaplaincy

for the benefit of the many youth who will, for centuries to come, frequent this University.

When the State of Tennessee discharges, in an equitable manner, her indebtedness to this University, the people of Nashville continuing to manifest an interest in its welfare proportionate to that hitherto exhibited, the whole of the above brilliant perspective will be realized. Then the city and the State will possess a complete University, fully endowed ; its professors receiving the moderate but sure income which enables scientific and literary men to devote themselves to experiment and research unfettered by the daily cares of life ; its pupils not deterred by high fees restricting its advantages to the rich, but welcomed freely to the choice stores at its disposal, and by using and adding to these stores, repaying the State and public a thousand fold the benefits received.

In a few words we have sketched what may be done in our own times if our people are wise, far-sighted, liberal. If not, still the work has commenced never to cease. Eight years will witness its progress ; eighty years its development, and perhaps eight hundred its maturity. In the University, as in the State, we work not for one but for many generations.



## APPENDIX.

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By a great Free University is not meant one in which the professors work for nothing and find themselves, but one in which the professors receive a sure and comfortable support, and in which the scholars pay very limited fees indeed, the whole being handsomely endowed by private and public munificence. The first step towards such an institution in this our truly beautiful city was taken by the Board of Trustees of the University in the summer of 1854, and after very mature deliberation was recommended unanimously by the Board of Education, composed of such citizens as F. B. Fogg, R. J. Meigs, John A. McEwen, and W. K. Bowling, to the Common Council. After full discussion in the latter the plan became the law of the city. Strange to say what was done after months of mature thought and concert by our oldest and ablest citizens, was undone in one night at the instance of strangers whose highest educational ambition for Nashville was to make her Public Schools a preparatory department to Yale College! The hasty repeal by the Know Nothing municipal government of Nashville in the autumn of 1854 of the combination of their great public school system with their great University, was a blow to the cause of education as well as to the material welfare of the city which will be felt to the end of the present century. Had two or three self-conceited, meddlesome hirelings let well enough alone Nashville would have possessed the most perfect as well as the most liberal system of Public Schools in America. Her Boys' High School would have been the University, with learning, art, science, law and medicine dispensed by able teachers; her Girls' High School would have been the grand old Female Academy, the oldest and the noblest woman's college in ten States. The meritorious and ambitious poor of our city receiving by right of residence a splendid education along with the richest boys and girls of the land, would have prized the privileges thus enjoyed, and by their scholarship and conduct would have stimulated the latter to industry and zeal. So complete and so excellent would the entire system have proved itself, as to have attracted purchasers for our vacant lots and inhabitants to our empty streets.

As it is, our Public School System lacking its crown, has literally done nothing to build up our streets, costing though it does one hundred thousand dollars, more or less per annum. At the present time when City, State and County are on the verge of bankruptcy, this subject of connecting the public schools with permanent institutions doing the same work in the same field, merits the calm and impartial attention of our public men, and more especially of all friends of popular education.

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In looking back over the educational annals of Nashville the attentive student becomes impressed with the singular indifference exhibited by the great majority of her wealthy citizens to the interests of the seats of learning which gave renown to her name and which reasonably supported would have poured countless thousands into her coffers. As a consequence of this sadly unfavorable characteristic of Nashville society we find a singularly intermittent chronicle of educational prosperity and adversity. Her Academy was as well taught and as well attended as any such institution ordinarily is in a remote inland frontier village. In 1806 it became Cumberland College, under the presidency of Dr. Joseph Priestley, a very eminent graduate of Liberty Hall, now the famous Washington College of Virginia, who left a most flourishing boys' school in Baltimore to undertake the charge. A few public spirited and liberal individuals no doubt induced him to make this exchange of a great commercial emporium for a village bordering upon the Indian country as his scene of labor. A thoroughly learned man, in a few years he made his mark indelibly upon the genius of the State, and so long as Bell, Foster and Turley are *clara nomina* among the worthies of Tennessee, so long will Priestley's name shine as a star of first magnitude. Yet in the short space of ten years Cumberland College was suspended for want of funds, to make a second fitful effort at life under the same distinguished man a few years later. The great mass of Davidson county well-to-do farmers stood by with apathetic hands, and the burden was too great for the broad-hearted few.

After eight years of suspended animation we find this select



and noble-minded few, represented by the Trimbles, Nichols, Yeatmans, Crabbs, Ewings, &c., &c., of that day plucking up courage to start again. And start they did with a President called all the way from Princeton, New Jersey, whom their eloquence and whole-souled enthusiasm for learning and religion, induced to leave the presidency of the then foremost college in the land for a post of labor almost out of the world. And so the University of Nashville was inaugurated, the educational eyes of all America being turned with fond affection and kind wishes upon her auspicious birth. Twenty-six years of poorly appreciated and worse requited toil and disappointment followed this hopeful beginning. In 1850 after having acquired honor in Europe no less than in America through her *alumni* and professors, the portals of the University were closed for want of a few thousand dollars per annum to make up deficiency in the salaries of such men as A. P. Stewart, Nathaniel Cross, and Gerard Troost, caused by repeated epidemics and the excessive multiplication of colleges in Tennessee and the adjoining States.

The breath was no sooner out of the Collegiate Department, then all the University, than half a dozen medical men of means and repute offered to put life into the institution through a medical school, provided that their plans met the hearty approval of the Board. So it came to pass that on October 11th, 1850, the great Medical School of Nashville was created, which has ever since kept the University living and loved in every hamlet from the Ohio to Mexico. In all the future annals of the University the names of these six physicians will figure conspicuously among the Woods', Alisons, Porters, Morgans, and others who have contributed of their means to the good cause.

In 1854 the Literary Department was re-opened with splendid buildings and much good will from the public. In less than one year it proved a failure, being unable to withstand the competition of the City Free Schools.

In 1855 through the energetic efforts of R. C. Foster, 3d, and the liberality of some thirty public-spirited citizens, the Literary Department was again re-opened, but upon the military plan as to dress, discipline and exercise. This school until the Civil

War commenced was attended by some two hundred young men annually. Financially the school was a perfect success, the tuition fees supporting the Faculty handsomely. As to scholarship the *alumni* of the University during this short period will hold their own with any equal number, come laureated from whence they may. As to military knowledge and skill the late gigantic struggle was a stupendous demonstration of the philosophic wisdom of the scheme. The youth and gallant lads from our University Hill, fighting on either side as nature ordered, demonstrated to the assembled wisdom of West-point, that useful military knowledge can be acquired while pursuing the civilian's studies. When all the brilliant deeds which during a four years struggle illustrated a thousand miles of battle-field are duly gathered and treasured up in the annals of our nation of a hundred millions the names of the thousand or more *élèves* of the Nashville Military College, boys though most of them were, will shine conspicuously bright. As an educational idea or *projet* so successful did it prove, that to-day the leaders of the national armies are calling upon Congress to make the idea one of general application, by engrafting the military feature upon one leading College in each State.

During the years 1862, 63, 64 and 65 the spacious grounds and buildings of the Literary Department were occupied as two immense army hospitals. The anticipation and presence of Asiatic Cholera deterred the Board from taking any steps towards re-organizing said Department in 1866. In the Autumn of 1867 the Montgomery Bell Academy was opened as the Preparatory Department of the University. This institution is based upon a handsome bequest from a Christian gentleman for a limited charity school. Its successful workings during the two years of its existence demonstrates the feasibility of pay and free scholars attending the same lessons; and proves that the city has no more need of a Boys' High School separate and distinct from this than has, to use a famous Tennessee figure of speech, a toad with side pockets.

At the present time men active in educational schemes have brought before the Trustees of the University plans for a De-



partment of Law, and also for a Department of Science, Literature and the Arts. It is designed that the professors in these important branches of the University shall, as in the Medical, receive no fixed salaries from the Board, but depend for remuneration upon the fees paid by students attracted hither by the fame of the University, the reputation of the city and the zeal of the teachers. These two departments will add much to the efficiency of the University; directly by the number of new students, law and literary, brought here, and indirectly by the numbers added to the great medical and preparatory schools in consequence of the completeness thus given the whole institution. Here however we are in danger of making a halt ruinous in every way to the interests of Nashville for want of some four or five thousand dollars. The buildings as left by the hospital authorities are not fit for lecture rooms. The Board of Trustees have no means to refit the buildings except by sale of valuable property at a very low rate. As a Board they have made the fortune of the University by the far sighted tenacity with which they have for fifty years held on to real estate, and by the fidelity of their official agents watching over and caring for the property of the institution during the civil war. This policy and fidelity persevered in for another fifty years will place the future of their trust beyond contingency. No wise minded citizen of Nashville would wish the Board to depart from this mode of administering a trust in which every one rich or poor has so much at stake. The Board have a right at this juncture to stand still until aid is offered from outside quarters. The city of Louisville as a municipality created its University with Law, Medicine and Literature taught in handsome buildings, with good libraries and complete apparatus. For more than thirty years this action of the city government has met with universal approbation from the inhabitants of Louisville. Within the last ten years more than half a dozen cities in France with a population of from twenty to thirty thousand souls have obtained from imperial government the privilege of founding a College or a Faculty at the expense of the municipalities. Here in Nashville our city rulers have not brains enough to give their Uni-

versity a cup of cold water ; and hence it need not excite surprise that for want of brains they have squandered since 1865 more thousands than would have sufficed to build in everlasting stone our whole brilliant and heaven-descended palace for the soul with all its noble aspirations for the future and refining communions with the past. Nashville as a city must hereafter foster its great Universities and Academies, or else Lexington or Louisville, or Atlanta, or Lebanon, or Memphis, or Knoxville, or all, will tear from its laggard and niggard brows the laurels it is no longer worthy to wear.

The Trustees of the University have a right to expect much from private liberality and munificence in building upon the foundations so carefully laid and preserved by their foresight and faithfulness. As already mentioned the Christian faith and zeal of our predecessors twenty, thirty, forty-five years since, mainly contributed to place the University in a condition for successful working and indeed bestowed the present magnificent and valuable University Square and a large portion of the vast buildings which now need repairing and furnishing. It cannot be that the present generation of Nashvillians have no soul for the intellectual, and that while zealous for factories, fair grounds and railroads they will prove indifferent to the very interests which have given their city a great name in all the land. A citizen of Chicago who had given a hundred thousand dollars to one school of religion in his own city and many thousands to different seats of learning in his native State of Virginia, but the other day sent a check for five thousand dollars to Washington College. We have men of equal wealth in Nashville. Have we none of equal spirit? The truth must be told, our people love fine houses, fine horses, fine parties and fine clothes too much and the public weal too little. In the North and East the millionaires give by the hundreds of thousands, the rich by the tens of thousands, and the poor by the tens and hundreds. And so the North-East has made all the land its tributary and vassal, because it had brains and developed brains. If we do not wish to be hewers of wood and drawers of water we must go and do likewise.